

Pathways to Youth Empowerment and Self-Reliance

IMPROVING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF DISPLACEMENT AFFECTED YOUTH IN JORDAN THROUGH HARMONIZING EDUCATION OUTCOMES WITH LABOR MARKET NEEDS

Jordan has one of the youngest populations in the world and one of the highest literacy rates among youth. Youth in Jordan hold the key to jump-starting the stagnant economy and creating lasting positive change in society. However, the country has thus far not been able to reap the benefits of this demographic dividend and the opportunity that the youth represent is not without its challenges. Jordan has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world and hosts the second-highest number of refugees per capita. Almost 40 per cent of youth aged 18-30 are unable to find work and the rate is even higher among refugees. Moreover, female youth unemployment is almost triple that of males. At the root of this problem is the mismatch between the outcomes of the education system, the skills of the youth, and the needs of the labor market. Additionally, higher education institutions in Jordan have not been able to adapt to emerging changes and evolution of the labor market.

The large influx of refugees to Jordan has placed considerable strain on the public education system in Jordan which was facing a number of indigenous challenges including a lack of innovative teaching methods and overcrowding of classrooms. In order to make more classrooms space available, over 200 public schools started to run on double shifts. This exacerbated the problem of overcrowding in schools and affected the overall quality of education. There is also a lack of flexible, informal sources of education, which restricts learning opportunities for both refugees and Jordanians wishing to access tertiary education.

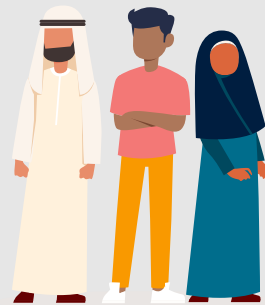
With the following project, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), in partnership with Kiron, Coursera and LOYAC (see page 3 for further details), will pilot an innovative solution to bolster pathways for youth in Jordan to transition to productive members of society. Through

tailored, innovative and student-centered curriculums, the project partners will aim to harmonize education outcomes with the needs of the labor market.

The proposed project will equip youth with the skill-based education and resources to excel in formal employment or entrepreneurial activity, in line with the demands of the private sector and the Jordanian market.

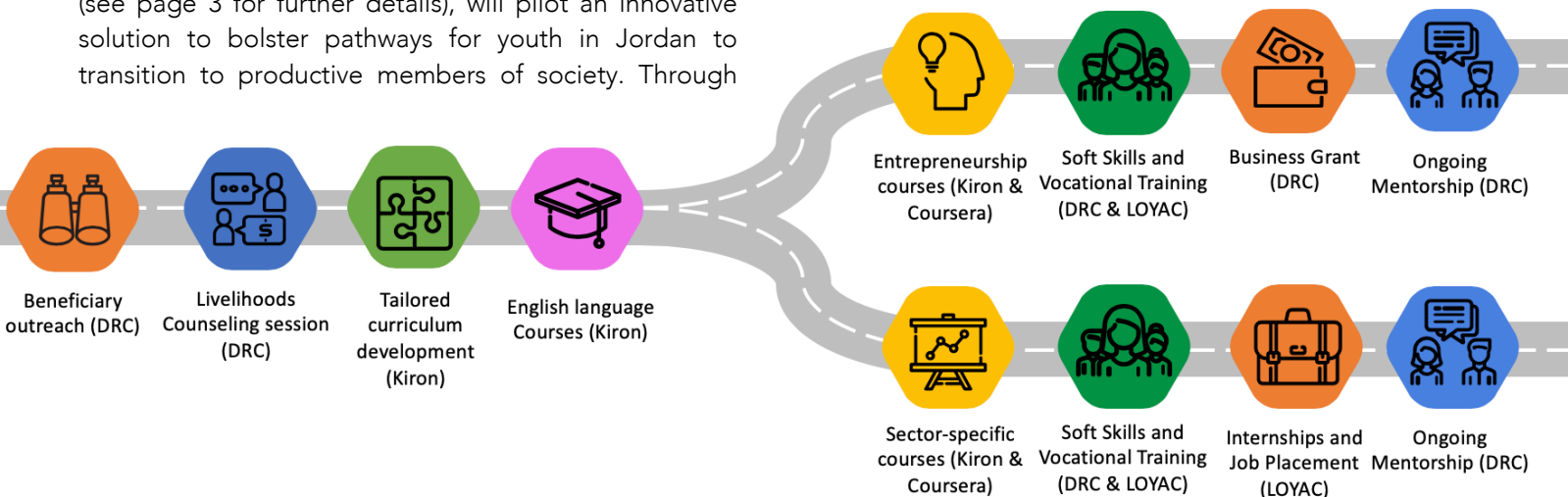
Numbers at a glance

- Population under the age of 30: 63%
- Literacy rate: 99%
- Number of registered refugees: 750,000
- Youth unemployment rate: 40%
- Syrian refugee youth unemployment: 84%
- Female Youth unemployment rate: 57%
- Female participation in the labor force: 14%



Harnessing the power of world-class tailored online education, critical soft-skills training and individualized mentoring, and leveraging partnerships with the private sector, this project will create a novel pathway for refugee and vulnerable Jordanian youth to reach their full potential and become self-reliant.

Through a range of soft-skills, vocational and English language training, complimented with mentorship, grants support and internship placements, this project will guide youth in Jordan towards career opportunities and life paths that nurture their individual needs, creativity and aptitudes. This project will use a blended approach to education, with best-in-class online education paired with in-person mentoring. This approach holds significant potential particularly for refugee youth whose education and training has been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 restrictions.



Market Assessment

DRC is currently conducting a comprehensive market assessment as part of the Novo Nordisk Foundation funded RYSE project to identify economic sectors and sub-sectors with the highest potential for employment based on current economic and market systems. The study will cover the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Karak, Zarqa, Madaba, Mafraq, and Ajloun. The results of the study will serve as a reference for the delivery of effective and responsive livelihood interventions for beneficiaries graduating from Kiron's educational programs.

Selection of youth and Livelihoods Counseling

Through DRC's wide network of community centers and partnerships with community-based organizations across Jordan, 500 refugees and Jordanian youth will be selected after thorough livelihoods counselling sessions to participate in the program. The selected youth will be divided into two cohorts of 250 each, with each cohort running for 1.5 years. The counselling session will be conducted by livelihoods mentors and will evaluate the youth's level of education, English language skills, livelihoods plan, work experience and skills, as well as their career interests. Priority will be provided to females and Syrian refugees. The youth and the mentor will then jointly develop a preliminary livelihoods pathway, that includes relevant skills, vocational training, internships and mentoring in either entrepreneurship/self-employment or formal job tracks. During the counseling session, the livelihoods mentor will share the findings of the assessment with the youth to ensure that the livelihoods pathway is harmonized with the market needs.

Blended Approach to 21st Century Skills development

Through this partnership, Kiron and DRC will tailor the curriculum of online Coursera courses which will be offered to the beneficiaries based on i) a comprehensive market assessment, ii) consultation with the private sector, and iii) assessment of preferred skills and career goals of the selected youth. There will be two distinct tracks for the youth, one for entrepreneurship and the other for formal job seekers. While these courses are online and self-paced, Kiron will use a blended approach that will combine online educational material with in-person and virtual mentorship to ensure optimal learning, individualized support and encouragement. Key courses will be adapted, either through translation or addition of subtitles, for the Arabic-speaking youth. A diverse array of courses will be offered including computer science, business management, entrepreneurship, website development, social work, graphic design, economics, data analysis, etc. As part of this partnership, Coursera will provide certificates of completion at no cost to the youth. This program will also facilitate access to online education

through the provision of internet credit and tablets for those who don't have one.

English Language Skills

Jordan has a very low English Proficiency Score, ranking 75 out of 100 countries according to the EF English Proficiency Index 2019. This is reported as a major hindrance to full employment among youth in Jordan. Following selection into the project, each youth will have to undertake an English language assessment test. Based on the results of this test, each student will be placed into an appropriate English language course by Kiron. This course will undertake a blended approach, with both online and offline components to ensure that students gain skills in conversational English. The proposed project will ensure that all students have a pre-intermediate (B1) level of English in order to be considered for the next stage of the pathway.

Soft Skills and Vocational Training

DRC and LOYAC will jointly deliver relevant soft skills and vocational training to each youth in the program. This will include skills development for communication and presentation, interview and CV writing, self-marketing, financial literacy, team building and work ethics. The youth can also apply and receive financial support through the program to take relevant courses at external vocational training centers in Jordan.

DRC and its partners will give special attention to the unique situation of Syrians refugees to ensure that they have an equal opportunity to benefit from the proposed project activities; Syrian refugees enroll as foreign students at Jordanian universities, paying much higher tuition than Jordanian students. Additionally, many Syrians see little value of continuing education given their limited professional opportunities due to government restrictions on most professions. DRC will work with its partners on ensuring that more Syrian youth have access to quality tertiary education through diverse and flexible educational resources, and on equipping Syrian students with transferrable and entrepreneurial skills.

Business Grants and Mentorship

Youth in the entrepreneurship track will be eligible to apply for a business grant from DRC to start their own business, following the completion of the soft skills and vocational training. Each business proposal will be evaluated by a committee of DRC livelihoods specialists for feasibility, quality of marketing strategy, budget and financial plan, the applicant's skills and experience and the long-term market viability. Through its partner networks and MOUs, DRC will also work with beneficiaries

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



to expand their access to markets and credit in order to ensure the sustainability of their businesses. Grant recipients will receive complimentary tailored business support and mentorship from DRC's livelihood staff for the remainder of the program.

Internships and Job Placement

LOYAC will leverage their network of partner companies and organizations to match youth in the formal employment track with paid internships and sector-specific work placements. To ease the youth's entrance to the professional world, follow-up mentorship and support will be provided. Moreover, all youth who take part in the program will continue to have access to advanced courses from the Kiron learning platform.

Expertise and Track Record



The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is a humanitarian, non-governmental, non-profit organization providing direct assistance to conflict-affected populations – refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities – in more than 40 countries around the world. Since 2015, economic recovery programming has been a centerpiece of DRC's response to the Syrian crisis in Jordan, guided by the overall objective to promote effective and dignified participation of vulnerable households from the Syrian refugee and host communities in the local economies. To that end, DRC has provided a range of tailored, market-driven interventions pathways including soft-skills trainings, technical and/or vocational trainings, home-based business grants, self-employment grants, formalization of work status for Syrian beneficiaries, cash for work, on-the-job training, and job referrals according to the needs and capacities of the individual households.



Kiron is an online learning platform for refugees worldwide and underserved communities in the Middle East. Since 2015, Kiron has been offering free online learning opportunities to refugees and underserved communities with the belief that education can change lives, transform communities, and build bridges. Kiron Campus is an online learning platform that enables students to receive free access to high-quality education for academic, professional and personal growth.

Kiron offers custom-made online study programs using massive open online courses (MOOCs) from renowned educational providers. In addition, Kiron provide short programs to prepare learners for the jobs market. Kiron

also works closely with partners from higher education institutions to see more non-formal credit recognition.



LOYAC is a locally driven social enterprise in Jordan that aims to improve the employability and increase the personal agency of youth. LOYAC has been supporting youth in Jordan since 2008

and, since its inception, built a strong network of private-sector partners. LOYAC's program matrix works together to ensure that Jordanian youth gain access to practical skills training, part-time work, peer support and mentorship, and safe and creative spaces so that they can explore career options and individual paths that will better meet their unique needs, ambitions, and aptitudes.

LOYAC performs yearly surveys with their partner businesses to identify and map out emerging and in-demand skills. Information collected through surveys is used by LOYAC to develop specialized training programs that are responsive to labor market requirements and the needs of their private sector partners. Through their private sector partners, LOYAC has been able to successfully place over 8,500 students in paid internships, with 68% of students finding full-time work upon graduation from university.



Coursera is a leading online learning platform

for higher education, where 64 million learners from around the world come to learn skills of the future. More than 200 of the world's top universities and industry educators' partner with Coursera to offer courses, specializations, certificates, and degree programs. As part of the Coursera for Refugees program, refugees can access Coursera's entire catalogue of 4,000 world-class courses as well as receive certificates for free. Coursera for Refugees serves over 26,000 refugees in 119 countries around the world. With 24,000 course completions and nearly 130,000 enrollments, refugee learners access top content from Coursera's university and company partners to learn skills that help transform their lives.

Proposed project details

Target locations: Amman, Karak, Mafrq and Ma'an

Direct Beneficiaries: 500

Duration: 3 years

Total Budget: DKK 10 million